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Joint News Release

Joint Public Relations Team

6:00 P.M., December 26, 2010

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State, local agencies respond to storm

Team efforts extended for public safety

With a Limited State of Emergency declared in Sussex and Kent counties, and a Blizzard Warning posted for Sussex County, state agencies and organizations are responding to this snow storm on many levels. Although snow accumulation is less in New Castle County at this time, actions are underway to ensure safety there as well.

Sussex County Emergency Operations Center has activated the EOC Storm Hotline for those who have questions regarding State of Emergency, road conditions, weather outlook. For updates and answers in Sussex, call 302-856-7366.

According to reports from Delaware Department of Transportation, in Sussex County, the main roads are passable, but snow covered. "Passable" means that roads can be driven upon, but only if the motorists uses extreme caution. The secondary and minor roads in Sussex County have not been plowed, so many of them may not be passable.

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In Kent County, the roads are more snow-covered in the southern edges of the county. In the northern part of the county, many of the roads are wet, but conditions could change quickly. DelDOT crews report all the primary roads are passable in Kent, and some of the minor roads have been plowed.

The Limited State of Emergency declared at 4 P.M. carries the Level 1 Driving Warning designation. Drivers are discouraged from operating motor vehicles on state roadways unless they have a significant safety, health or business reason to do so. Drivers may be issued a warning under these circumstances.

In New Castle County, the interstates and major roads are wet, with no snow coverage. New Castle has received significantly less snowfall than southern Delaware, but is expected to have accumulation of eight to 12 inches before the storm moves out Monday.

Delaware National Guard Joint Operations Center is activated and there are approximately 150 soldiers and 40 vehicles supporting Emergency Operations Centers throughout the state, including each county and City of Wilmington. Guard soldiers are also supporting Delaware State Police Troops. Guard vehicles in use are Humvees, tactical personnel transport and wreckers for assisting in towing disabled vehicles.

Spokesman Lt. Col. Leonard Gratteri said, "In addition to those soldiers active now, the Guard has hundreds of troops on standby and available for activation. We plan on conducting operations around the clock until the event is completed. We work in conjunction with DEMA, DelDOT, State Police and Highway Safety to support the citizens of Delaware."

Reports from Delaware State Police indicate that there are few accidents in Sussex and Kent at this time. In New Castle County where the lesser snow fall might lead to more drivers being out, there have been 3 personal injury accidents and 15 property damage accidents.

There were very few power outages as of 5:30 P.M., but Delmarva Power and the Delaware Electric Cooperative are working to respond to any outages and to maintain service to their customers. They recognize the potential for downed lines with steady and gusting winds of the magnitude of this storm. As support partners, the utilities have representatives in the State Emergency Operations Center who serve as communications liaisons with emergency management officials and responders.

Delaware Emergency Management Agency is coordinating communications among local emergency management offices and all relevant state officials and organizations. The public is urged to monitor all weather conditions and follow their household emergency plan to remain safe and to protect property. Whenever possible to do so safely, check on neighbors, family and friends who might need assistance. For tips on emergency planning, see www.dema.delaware.gov, www.delawarecitizencorps.org and www.ready.gov.

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